

INFLUENCE OF TEACHER MOTIVATION ON TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS, LANG'ATA SUB COUNTY IN KENYA

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Abstract

Teacher effectiveness remains a central determinant of educational quality and learner achievement in primary education. This study examined the influence of teacher motivation on teacher effectiveness in public primary schools in Lang'ata Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. The study adopted a mixed-methods approach, integrating a correlational research design for the quantitative component and a phenomenological design for the qualitative component. The target population entailed 1,200 respondents, comprising teachers, Grade 8 learners, and deputy head teachers, from which a sample of 300 respondents was selected using stratified and purposive sampling techniques. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and semi-structured interview guides and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics alongside thematic analysis for qualitative data. Upon analysis, the study revealed a moderate positive relationship between teacher motivation and teacher effectiveness, $r(98) = 0.396, p < .001$. The results further showed that teacher motivation enhances teacher-learner relationships and promotes collaboration among teachers, leading to increased job satisfaction, confidence, and a supportive school climate that strengthens instructional quality. The study concludes that teacher motivation is a critical determinant of teacher effectiveness and plays a significant role in improving teaching practices and learner outcomes in public primary schools.

Keywords: *Teacher motivation; teacher effectiveness; public primary schools; instructional quality; professional commitment; classroom performance; learner outcomes.*

INTRODUCTION

Teacher effectiveness has remained a central concern in education systems due to its direct influence on learner achievement, instructional quality, and overall school performance, with contemporary scholarship consistently positioning teacher motivation as a foundational driver of effectiveness that shapes how teachers plan, deliver, and evaluate instruction. A systematic review by Alza and Kurniawati (2025) highlights that teacher effectiveness in primary schools is multidimensional, influenced by a combination of individual, institutional, and contextual factors, with motivation emerging as a consistent and dominant variable. Motivated teachers tend to demonstrate higher levels of commitment, creativity, and adaptability, which are essential in

responding to evolving curriculum demands and diverse learner needs. Kumar (2023) similarly affirms that motivation significantly influences teachers' job performance by enhancing their willingness to invest effort, persist in challenging situations, and pursue continuous improvement. This is reinforced by Mishra and Sharma (2023), who emphasize that motivated educators are more engaged in their professional roles and more inclined toward self-improvement and reflective practice, while intrinsic motivation is particularly critical in sustaining long-term commitment and fostering a strong sense of purpose in teaching, ultimately leading to improved instructional outcomes. These perspectives indicate that teacher motivation operates as a central mechanism linking professional commitment, instructional quality, and learner achievement, and it is within this integrated understanding that the present study situates its inquiry to examine how motivation shapes teacher effectiveness in the specific context under investigation.

Within school environments, leadership practices and organizational conditions have been identified as key determinants of teacher motivation and effectiveness. Studies by Andrianto, Komardi, and Priyono (2023) and Noorhapizah, Suriansyah, and Abidin (2023) demonstrate that supportive leadership, positive work climate, and effective management practices significantly enhance teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and performance. Transformational leadership, in particular, has been shown to inspire teachers, strengthen organizational commitment, and promote a culture of excellence (Normianti, Aslamiah, and Suhaimi, 2019; Rachmad et al., 2023). Engin (2020) further establishes that teacher motivation interacts with factors such as self-efficacy, parental attitudes, and leadership approaches to influence learner academic achievement, suggesting that motivation operates within a broader ecosystem of educational variables. Khun Inkeeree et al. (2022) argue that both intrinsic and extrinsic forms of motivation are necessary for enhancing school effectiveness, as they encourage teachers to actively engage in instructional innovation and collaborative practices. These findings collectively point to the importance of creating enabling environments that nurture teacher motivation through recognition, professional support, and participatory leadership structures.

Evidence from developing country contexts provides deeper insight into the practical implications of teacher motivation on educational outcomes. Balogun (2020) and Isa, Abdulwahab, and Showunmi (2025) found that motivation significantly influences teacher effectiveness, particularly in primary schools where foundational learning is established. Their studies indicate that motivated teachers are more dedicated, punctual, and responsive to learners' needs, thereby improving classroom engagement and academic performance. Similarly, Berondo (2020) established a strong relationship between teachers' level of motivation and their teaching effectiveness, emphasizing that motivation enhances both instructional delivery and classroom management. Earlier studies by Muranda et al. (2015) and Peter (2013) also demonstrate that motivated teachers exhibit higher levels of productivity, commitment, and instructional quality, while lack of motivation leads to absenteeism, low morale, and poor learner outcomes. Mbope (2015), in the context of public primary schools in Tanzania, further highlights that inadequate motivation often resulting from poor working conditions, low remuneration, and limited professional development opportunities negatively affects the quality of teaching and learning.

These challenges are reflective of broader systemic issues affecting many education systems in Sub Saharan Africa, where resource constraints and institutional limitations continue to impact teacher performance.

In the Kenyan context, similar dynamics are evident, particularly in public primary schools where teachers operate under varying conditions that influence their motivation and effectiveness. The interplay between motivation, leadership, and working conditions continues to shape teacher performance and learner achievement. Drawing from the broader body of literature, it is evident that enhancing teacher motivation through supportive leadership, improved working environments, and access to professional development opportunities is critical for strengthening instructional quality. At the local level, particularly in areas such as Lang'ata Sub County in Nairobi County, the need to understand how motivation influences teacher effectiveness becomes even more pertinent given the diversity of school contexts and learner needs. Teachers in such settings are required to navigate complex classroom environments while maintaining high levels of performance and commitment. Therefore, the study sought to examine influence of teacher motivation on teacher effectiveness in public primary schools in Lang'ata Sub County in Kenya.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed mixed methods approaches of data collection, analysis, and reporting. The study adopted a correlational research design for quantitative approach to examine the link between various pedagogical factors that influence teacher effectiveness specifically, teacher motivation, teacher characteristics and feedback mechanisms in public primary schools. The researcher opted to use this research design since it allows for the examination of the strength and direction of associations between these variables without manipulating any of them (Creswell, 2014). This design facilitated the understanding of how performance evaluation interacts with these factors, providing insights into their influence on teacher effectiveness.

Besides, the research adopted phenomenological design for qualitative approach to explore teachers' lived experiences and perceptions regarding pedagogical factors and teacher effectiveness. According to Schram (2003), Phenomenology is a study of people's conscious experience of their 'lifeworld' that is, their everyday life and social action. Patton (2002) emphasized that the experiences of different people are bracketed, analyzed, and compared to identify the essences of the phenomenon, for example, the essence of loneliness, the essence of being a mother, or the essence of being a participant in a particular program. The assumption of essence, like the ethnographer's assumption that culture exists and is important, becomes the defining characteristic of purely phenomenological study. Through phenomenological experiences of deputy head teachers, the researcher understood clearly the concept of performance evaluation and teacher effectiveness.

Target Population

In this study, the target population comprised 1,200 respondents drawn from public primary schools in Lang'ata Sub-County. The respondents included 100 teachers, 190 Grade 8 learners, and 10 deputy head teachers.

Teachers were included because they are directly responsible for instructional delivery and embody the characteristics under investigation. Grade 8 learners were included to provide insights into teacher effectiveness from the learner's perspective, while deputy head teachers were selected as key informants due to their role in instructional supervision and evaluation. Table 1 summarizes the distribution of the target population across the sampled schools.

Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

This section outlines the procedures used to select participants and determine an appropriate sample size for the study. The study employed a combination of stratified and purposive sampling techniques to ensure that the selected respondents were both representative and relevant to the research objectives. Stratified sampling was used to divide the population into meaningful subgroups based on schools, ensuring that each school was adequately represented in the study. This approach enhanced the representativeness of the sample and reduced sampling bias. Within each stratum, participants were selected proportionately to ensure balanced representation across the study area. Purposive sampling was used to select deputy head teachers as key informants for the qualitative component of the study. These participants were chosen because of their direct involvement in instructional supervision, teacher evaluation, and feedback processes within the schools. Their insights were considered valuable in providing in-depth understanding of how teacher characteristics influence effectiveness in practice.

Sample Size

The sample size for the study was determined using Slovin's formula: $n = N / (1 + N * e^2)$, where 'n' represents the sample size, 'N' denotes the total population, and 'e' is the margin of error, which was chosen by the researcher.

In this case, the population size was $N = 1200$

$$n = 1200 / (1 + 1200 * 0.0025)$$

$$n = 1200 / 1 + 3$$

$$n = 1200 / 4$$

$$n = 300$$

Table: Population and Sample Distribution

Respondent Category	Population (N)	Sample (n)	Sampling Technique
Teachers	300	100	Stratified sampling
Grade 8 Learners	890	190	Stratified sampling
Deputy Head Teachers	10	10	Purposive
Total	1,200	300	

The final sample consisted of 300 respondents, distributed as follows: 100 teachers, 190 Grade 8 learners, and 10 deputy head teachers. This distribution ensured adequate representation of all key respondent categories while maintaining statistical reliability.

Data Collection Instrumentation

Data were collected using both structured questionnaires and semi-structured interview guides to capture both quantitative and qualitative information. The structured questionnaires were administered to teachers and learners and consisted of Likert-scale items designed to measure teacher characteristics, motivation, feedback mechanisms, and perceptions of teacher effectiveness. The questionnaire for teachers was organized into sections covering demographic information, teacher motivation, teacher characteristics, and feedback mechanisms. The learner questionnaire focused on perceptions of teacher professionalism and enthusiasm, providing valuable insights into how learners experience teacher effectiveness in the classroom. The use of self-administered questionnaires allowed respondents to provide honest and independent responses, enhancing the reliability of the data collected (Kasomo, 2011).

For the qualitative component, semi-structured interviews were conducted with deputy head teachers. This approach allowed the researcher to engage participants in one-on-one discussions, enabling deeper exploration of their experiences and perceptions regarding teacher characteristics and instructional effectiveness. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews made it possible to probe further into emerging issues, thereby enriching the data collected (Patton, 2015; DeMarrais, 2004).

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize the characteristics of the data and provide an overview of the respondents' views on teacher characteristics and teacher effectiveness. Inferential statistics, particularly correlation analysis, were used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between teacher characteristics and teacher effectiveness. Independent samples t-tests were also conducted to

examine differences in responses based on selected demographic variables. These analyses provided empirical evidence on how teacher characteristics influence teacher effectiveness within the study context.

Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involved coding, categorizing, and identifying key themes from the interview responses. The analysis was conducted concurrently with data collection, allowing emerging patterns to be captured effectively. The process involved assigning codes to segments of data, grouping similar codes into categories, and developing overarching themes that reflected participants' experiences and perceptions. According to Merriam (2005), coding is an essential process in qualitative research that facilitates the organization and interpretation of data. This approach enabled the researcher to capture the essence of participants' experiences and provide deeper insights into how teacher characteristics influence teacher effectiveness.

Ethical Considerations

An introductory letter from Africa International University (AIU) facilitated the acquisition of a research permit from the Ministry of Education and approval from the Lang'ata Sub-County education office. Participation was voluntary, with respondents signing informed consent forms. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained, and data were used solely for academic purposes without recording identifying details.

Participants were protected from harm, with questions carefully framed to avoid discomfort, and no respondent was coerced into answering. Ethical principles of honesty and integrity were upheld throughout data collection, analysis, and reporting, with all sources duly acknowledged. Data were securely stored, with access limited to the researcher, and will be disposed of in line with institutional guidelines.

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The study established the gender distribution of the teachers. The findings indicate that 75% of the respondents were female, while 25% were male.

The study established the age distribution of the teachers. The findings show that 47% of the respondents were aged between 20–30 years, 33% were aged 31–40 years, 13% were aged 41–50 years, while 7% were aged 51 years and above.

The study examined the academic qualifications of the teachers. The findings indicate that 56.3% of the respondents had attained diploma-level education, 28.1% had bachelor’s degrees, while 15.6% had master’s degrees.

The study established the teaching experience of the respondents. The findings show that 44.8% had 0–5 years of experience, 31.3% had 6–10 years, 14.6% had 16–20 years, while 9.4% had 11–15 years of teaching experience.

The study established the current professional positions of the respondents. The findings indicate that 94.8% were classroom teachers, 3.1% were deputy head teachers, while 2.1% were head teachers.

Influence of Teacher Motivation on Teacher Effectiveness in Public Primary Schools

The study sought to examine the influence of teacher motivation on teacher effectiveness in public primary schools. Respondents were asked to give their level of agreement on statements relating to how motivation influences their effectiveness in areas such as improving teaching practices, setting professional goals, developing positive relationships with learners, and collaborating with other teachers. Their responses were measured on a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (SD) to Strongly Agree (SA). The findings presented in this section are based on these responses and provide insight into the extent to which teacher motivation contributes to teacher effectiveness.

Table 1: Influence of Teacher Motivation on Teacher Effectiveness

Statement	SD	D	A	SA
Motivation encourages me to improve my teaching practices	4.20%	3.10%	24.00%	68.80%
Motivation helps me set personal professional goals	4.20%	3.10%	24.00%	68.80%
Motivation encourages me to develop positive relationships with learners	4.20%	3.10%	25.00%	67.70%
Motivation enables me to collaborate with other teachers	5.20%	7.30%	26.00%	61.50%

Key: SD: Strongly Disagree; D: Disagree; A: Agree, SA Strongly Agree)

The findings from Table 1 indicate that 92.8% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that motivation leads to improvement in teaching practices, encouraging them to enhance their instructional skills, while only 7.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Regarding personal and professional goal setting, 92.8% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that motivation helps them set high personal and professional goals, suggesting a strong orientation toward career growth and professional development among motivated teachers.

In relation to teacher–learner relationships, 92.7% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that motivation encourages them to develop positive relationships with learners.

On collaboration among teachers, 87.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that motivation enables them to collaborate effectively with colleagues, promoting teamwork and professional interaction within schools.

Overall, the results demonstrate that a substantial majority of teachers perceive motivation as a key factor influencing improvement in teaching practices, goal setting, teacher–learner relationships, and collaboration.

Deputy Head teacher Responses of Teacher Motivation on Teacher Effectiveness

During the interview, teachers were asked to explain how motivation influences teacher effectiveness in public primary schools. The responses indicated that motivation plays a significant role in enhancing teachers' commitment, professionalism, and effectiveness in teaching and learning. Participants consistently noted that motivated teachers demonstrate higher levels of dedication to instructional preparation, learner support, and collaboration with colleagues.

Deputy Head Teacher 1 explained that motivation strengthens teacher effort and responsibility, stating that “a motivated teacher is willing to go an extra mile by spending more time with learners in school, marking their work, and preparing professional documents in readiness for subsequent lessons” (DHT 1, 2025).

Deputy Head Teacher 2 provided a more detailed explanation of motivated teacher behaviour as follows:

Motivated teachers tend to conduct additional research beyond what is required and invest extra time in supporting learners. They ensure that syllabus coverage is completed effectively and also take time to confirm that learners have understood concepts before moving to the next topic. In addition, such teachers are more willing to assist learners outside classroom hours and engage in activities that enhance academic understanding and performance (DHT 2, 2025)

Deputy Head Teacher 2 further emphasized the role of recognition in sustaining motivation, noting that “when teachers feel valued and appreciated, they are more willing to work hard and improve their professional practices” (DHT 2, 2025).

Deputy Head Teacher 3 similarly highlighted that motivation enhances professional commitment, explaining that:

Motivated teachers demonstrate greater willingness to engage in professional growth activities, including conducting further research and making personal sacrifices in their areas of specialization. This enhances their ability to deliver effective instruction and respond to diverse learner needs in the classroom (DHT 3, 2025)

Participants were also asked how motivation influences goal setting among teachers. Deputy Head Teacher 4 stated that “highly motivated teachers set high academic goals for learners and strive to achieve excellence in their professional roles” (DHT 4, 2025), while Deputy Head Teacher 5 added that:

Motivation enables teachers to plan their lessons professionally and create a conducive learning environment. It also promotes commitment to professional goals and is not limited to financial incentives alone but includes appreciation, a friendly working environment, and support from school leadership (DHT 5, 2025)

In relation to teacher–learner relationships, Deputy Head Teacher 3 provided an expanded explanation:

Motivated teachers feel appreciated and valued, which reduces work-related stress and enhances their relationships with learners. In contrast, lack of motivation may lead to emotional strain, reduced engagement, and strained interactions between teachers and learners, which negatively affects classroom dynamics and learning outcomes. (DHT 3, 2025)

Deputy Head Teacher 1 also noted that “highly motivated teachers have high self-esteem and maintain professional balance, while demotivated teachers often transfer frustrations and emotions to learners” (DHT 1, 2025), while Deputy Head Teacher 4 concluded that “highly motivated teachers demonstrate confidence, dedication, and responsiveness to learners’ needs” (DHT 4, 2025).

Regarding collaboration, Deputy Head Teacher 3 explained that:

Collaboration becomes easier when teachers are motivated and appreciated by others, as this builds trust and confidence among colleagues. It also encourages openness, sharing

of teaching strategies, and joint problem-solving in addressing classroom challenges (DHT 3, 2025)

Deputy Head Teacher 1 added that “motivated teachers are team players who are willing to consult, inquire, and seek clarification from colleagues” (DHT 1, 2025), while Deputy Head Teacher 2 noted that such teachers often engage in co-teaching and sharing of ideas to improve learner understanding. Deputy Head Teacher 4 further stated that “motivated teachers view their colleagues as partners and equals, which reduces conflicts and enhances teamwork” (DHT 4, 2025), and Deputy Head Teacher 5 concluded that “motivated teachers cooperate easily with others and experience fewer disagreements in their professional interactions” (DHT 5, 2025).

Correlation between teacher Motivation and Teacher Effectiveness

H01 Stated :- Teacher motivation does not influence teacher effectiveness in public primary schools.

The study sought to examine whether there is a statistically significant relationship between teacher motivation and teacher effectiveness in the teaching and learning process in public primary schools in Langata Sub County, Nairobi, Kenya. Table 2 shows the Pearson correlation results between teacher motivation and teacher effectiveness.

Table 2: Correlation between Teacher Motivation and Teacher Effectiveness

Correlations			
		Teacher Motivation	Teacher Motivation
Pearson Correlation	Teacher Effectiveness	1.000	.396
	Teacher Motivation	.396	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Teacher Effectiveness	.	.000
	Teacher Motivation	.000	.
N	Teacher Effectiveness	100	100
	Teacher Motivation	100	100

$p < .05$

A Pearson correlation analysis revealed a moderate positive relationship between teacher motivation and teacher effectiveness, $r(98) = 0.396$, $p < .001$. This indicates that higher levels of teacher motivation are associated with higher teacher effectiveness in public primary schools in Langata Sub County. The relationship was statistically significant, suggesting that teacher motivation is an important factor influencing teacher effectiveness in the teaching and learning process.

DISCUSSION

The high level of agreement among teachers that motivation enhances teaching practices reflects a deeply rooted connection between internal drive and professional effectiveness in the classroom. This finding corroborates Hassan and Zaheer (2022), who established that intrinsically motivated teachers demonstrate higher levels of commitment, enthusiasm, and instructional competence. Such teachers are more likely to invest additional effort in lesson preparation, adopt learner-centred pedagogical approaches, and continuously refine their instructional strategies to meet diverse learner needs. Livingstone (2011) similarly emphasized that recognition and reward systems play a critical role in reinforcing teacher motivation and sustaining high performance in instructional delivery. However, this study extends existing knowledge by demonstrating that within the context of Lang'ata Sub-County, teacher motivation is not only an individual psychological attribute but also a product of institutional and environmental conditions that collectively shape instructional quality and classroom effectiveness.

The findings on personal and professional goal setting further demonstrate that motivation plays a central role in shaping teachers' career trajectories and professional aspirations. This aligns with Arinaitwe and Bridget (2024), who observed that motivated teachers are more likely to establish clear, purposeful, and achievable professional goals that guide continuous improvement in their instructional practice. Such teachers actively engage in reflective practice, seek opportunities for professional development, and demonstrate commitment to enhancing learner outcomes. However, the study also reflects contextual constraints identified in the literature, including poor working conditions, limited promotion opportunities, and inadequate institutional support, which may weaken teacher morale and reduce sustained professional growth. In advancing knowledge, this study provides empirical evidence that in the Kenyan primary school context, teacher motivation operates as a mediating mechanism between institutional conditions and teachers' capacity to sustain professional development, instructional innovation, and long-term effectiveness.

The strong agreement on the role of motivation in fostering positive teacher–learner relationships highlights the interpersonal dimension of effective teaching. This finding supports Kimuyu et al. (2023), who established that low teacher motivation is associated with reduced learner engagement and weaker instructional relationships, and Dindia and Mbirithi (2025), who noted that motivation enhances teacher confidence, empathy, and interpersonal competence. Motivated teachers are more likely to demonstrate patience, emotional stability, and responsiveness to learners' academic and emotional needs, thereby fostering inclusive and supportive classroom environments. This study contributes additional insight by showing that teacher motivation not only improves interpersonal relationships but also directly influences classroom behavioural climate, shaping learner participation, discipline, and overall engagement in the learning process within primary school settings.

The results on collaboration among teachers demonstrate that motivation plays a pivotal role in strengthening collective professional practice and fostering cohesive school environments. This finding aligns with Ogwen et al. (2024), who reported a statistically significant relationship between motivation and teacher effectiveness, and Nizeyimana (2024), who identified a positive correlation between incentives and job performance. Similarly, Matoke and Nyamongo (2015) emphasized that developmental factors such as training opportunities and supportive leadership enhance teacher motivation and collaborative engagement. Conversely, Kagema (2018) observed that low motivation undermines teamwork, reduces participation in professional learning activities, and weakens curriculum implementation. This study extends these findings by empirically demonstrating that in resource-constrained school environments, teacher motivation functions as a key enabling condition for sustained peer learning, collaborative instructional planning, and collective problem-solving, all of which are essential for improving instructional consistency and school performance.

The findings strongly confirm that teacher motivation is a fundamental determinant of teacher effectiveness, influencing not only individual instructional performance but also the broader quality of teaching and learning within schools. Motivated teachers exhibit stronger professional commitment, engage in continuous professional development, and are more likely to adopt innovative and learner-centred instructional strategies. They also foster positive learner relationships and contribute to collaborative school cultures that support shared responsibility for learner success. The key contribution of this study to existing knowledge is that it empirically establishes, within the Kenyan primary school context, that teacher motivation operates as a multi-dimensional construct influencing individual teacher performance, classroom behavioural dynamics, and institutional instructional culture. This extends existing literature by positioning motivation as both an individual and systemic determinant of teacher effectiveness, particularly in public primary school environments.

CONCLUSION

The study established that teacher characteristics and teacher motivation significantly influence teacher effectiveness in public primary schools in Lang'ata Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. The descriptive findings revealed that key teacher characteristics such as professionalism, creativity, adaptability, and collaboration contribute to improved instructional practices, learner engagement, and classroom effectiveness. The inferential analysis further confirmed statistically significant positive relationships between the study variables, with teacher characteristics showing a moderate positive relationship with teacher effectiveness ($r = 0.460$, $p < .001$), and teacher motivation also demonstrating a moderate positive relationship with teacher effectiveness ($r = 0.396$, $p < .001$). These findings indicate that improvements in both teacher characteristics and motivation are associated with higher levels of teacher effectiveness in the teaching and learning process. The study therefore concludes that teacher effectiveness is influenced not only by professional qualifications and experience, but also by motivational and behavioural attributes that shape classroom practice.

The study recommends that education stakeholders, including policymakers and school administrators, should prioritize the development and implementation of comprehensive teacher motivation strategies. These should include structured recognition and reward systems, supportive and transformational leadership, and increased access to continuous professional development opportunities. Additionally, improving working conditions, ensuring fair remuneration, and providing clear career progression pathways are essential for sustaining teacher motivation. Schools should also foster a collaborative culture that encourages teamwork, peer learning, and shared responsibility for learner achievement. Such interventions will enhance teacher morale, strengthen instructional practices, and ultimately lead to improved educational outcomes.

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